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## Despite its woes, California is still the most popular state

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- **Florida, Hawaii, Texas and Colorado are runners up**
- **Seventh year at the top for California**

Record unemployment rates, gridlock in Sacramento, a drought and accompanying water wars. The negatives of life in California are well reported.

Ho hum, says the rest of the country, we still love the place.

For the sixth year in a row, California tops the list of states that Americans would choose to live in if they did not live in the states where they are now.

Florida, which was the most popular state in 2001, retains second place on the list and Hawaii is number three, as it was in 2007.

New York City tops the list of cities that people would most like to live in or near, followed by Denver and San Francisco.

The Harris Poll has asked these questions almost every year since 1997. Florida topped the list of the most popular states every year from 1997 to 2001. California jumped to the number one position in 2002 and has remained there ever since.

After California and Florida, the states where the largest number of Americans would like to live are Hawaii (#3), Texas (#4), and Colorado (#5). Next came three states tied for 6th place: Arizona, North Carolina and Washington state.

Filling out the rest of the top 15 states are Tennessee (#9), Oregon (#10), New York (#11), South Carolina and Massachusetts (both equal #12), Georgia (#14), and Montana (#15).

New York City has topped the list of cities where the most people would like to live in or near, every year, since 1997, except in 1998 when it slipped behind San Francisco. However, Denver and San Francisco, now tied for second place, have moved up from # 9 and # 4 last year.

This is the first time in the 13-year series that Denver has placed higher than #4.

The other most popular cities on the top ten are San Diego (#4), Seattle (#5), Chicago (#6), Boston (#7), Las Vegas (#8), Washington, DC (#9), and Dallas (#10).

Also in the top 15 are Austin (#11), Nashville (#12), Atlanta (#13), Orlando (#14), and Los Angeles (#15).

So what?

This is much more than a beauty contest, says Harris. The most popular states and cities where large numbers of people would like to live tend to attract tourists and business. They are places where people like to take vacations and where companies like to have their offices and factories.

The climate appears to be important. The majority of the states and cities listed have hot or warm climates, and the top four states are all in the Sun Belt.

However, both the two most popular cities, New York City and Denver, get snow and low temperatures in winter.

It is worth nothing that California is still top of the list of states in spite of the widely publicized economic problems and the political battles to control its budget deficits.

### *Methodology*

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States Aug. 10 and 18 among 2,984 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

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